

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Amir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah of Kuwait

August 3, 2009

President Obama. I want to extend my welcome to the Amir of Kuwait. We are grateful for his visit. When I was traveling in the region, the Amir showed me great hospitality, so I'm glad to be able to return the gesture. Although, I have to confess that I think the meal that we're preparing is much smaller than the one he prepared for me.

Kuwait and the United States enjoy very strong bilateral relations. We are looking to make those relations even stronger. Kuwait has been an outstanding host for the United States Armed Forces during its operations in Iraq. And as we transition our operations in Iraq, it's important for us to emphasize not only our gratitude to Kuwait, but also our ongoing commitment to Kuwait's security.

We're also discussing important regional issues ranging from the importance of moving the Arab-Israeli peace process forward, to the situation in Afghanistan, our joint counterterrorism efforts, and our need to emphasize Iran meeting its international obligations. And I'm confident that, based on this conversation and ongoing work between our two countries, that we can strengthen not only Kuwaiti-U.S. relationships, but also create a more stable region of peace and security in the region.

Amir Sabah. Thank you very much, Mr. President, Your Excellency, for this kind welcome. And I would like to affirm to the American people that Kuwait shall remain a partner of the United States; Kuwait shall remain an ally and a partner of the United States.

At the same token, I'm very delighted to be here with my colleagues during this visit. I also am very delighted to congratulate President Obama on his birthday tomorrow. And I also would like to congratulate him on the finding of the remains of the pilot, the U.S. pilot Speicher, that was lost back during the first war of Iraq.

I also would like to congratulate President Obama on his Presidency. We have also discussed various issues of Afghanistan, the issue of Iran, and the issue of the Israeli-Arab relations. I affirmed to President Obama that we are interested in bringing about peace to the Middle East. It is in our interest that peace be brought about. And the indicator is that there is an Arab peace initiative that was agreed upon by all other Arab parties and states, and we implement this peace initiative when Israel implements and fulfills its obligations.

President Obama. Okay. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Amir Sabah referred to Capt. Michael Scott Speicher, USN, who was lost in action on January 17, 1991 and whose remains were recovered in Iraq's Anbar Province in July. Amir Sabah spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Kuwait :: Amir Sabah.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah.

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